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Subject: Postwar Forest Conservation Objectives

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Suggested Use: Background information for use in educational work, including speeches, discussions by local groups, and for articles.

#### WHY A NATIONAL POST-WAR FOREST PROGRAM IS NEEDED

The condition of our forests affects the welfare of all citizens, regardless of location or occupation. Wood, one of the basic raw materials, is needed in one form or another in practically every industry and enterprise.

One third of the total land area of the U. S. is forest land. How it is handled will have an important effect on flood control and conservation of water supplies. Forest ranges are a big factor in livestock production. Forests harbor much of our wildlife, and provide outdoor recreation opportunities for millions.

The present forest situation is far from rosy.— We are not growing timber as fast as our forests are being depleted. This has been true for years. The Forest Service estimates that drain on our forests from timber cutting, fires, insects and disease in 1942 exceeded total usable growth by 50 percent. Of our 462 million acres of commercial forest land, some 77 million are now virtually non-productive. Only about 100 million acres of old-growth timber are left, not all of which is economically accessible. All of the remaining area has been cut over and a large part of the cut-over land is now producing only a fraction of potential capacity.

#### THE FARMER'S INTEREST IN FOREST CONSERVATION

In farm operations, timber is an essential item. Forests help safeguard farm water supplies; in the West, irrigation farming is largely dependent upon forested watersheds. Thriving forest industries mean better markets for farm produce, and conversely, declining industries hamper agricultural development. (Areas of greatest rural poverty, biggest rural relief rolls, and highest rates of tax delinquency have frequently been those areas where forest depletion has gone farthest).

Forests occupy more acreage than any other crop on American farms. Yet woodlands are contributing only  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{3}$  of what they should to farm economy in timber growth for home use, cash income, part-time employment, and other benefits. As much as 55 percent of all commercial farm woodlands has been mistreated and high-graded until it is now only partially productive. Another 15 percent is practically non-productive.



## A POSTWAR PROGRAM

The over-all objective of our post-war forest conservation program is full, sustained production of timber and other essential forest products and services, commensurate with human needs. With right handling, our forests are potentially capable of meeting all our foreseeable timber needs in perpetuity, and they can contribute in many other ways to national and individual welfare. We should aim for an "economy of abundance" in forestry.

### Special Objectives

1. Utilize productively all wild lands best suited to forest use for production of timber, forage, wildlife, recreational service, and watershed protection.
2. Prevent further destructive exploitation and deterioration of these resources.
3. Restore damaged lands to full productivity.
4. Develop new and improved means of utilizing goods and services from forest lands.

### WHAT IT WILL TAKE TO REACH THESE OBJECTIVES

1. Public regulation of timber cutting and related practices, to insure that forest lands will be left in reasonably productive condition. The Department of Agriculture has recommended the establishment of basic standards of forest practice through national legislation, leaving to the individual States the opportunity to apply the specific controls needed.  
  
Question: If any State did not within a reasonable time enact and carry out adequate regulatory measures in line with the basic standards, should the federal government be authorized to act directly to undertake regulation within that State?
2. Various cooperative aids to private owners, including:
  - a. Extension of adequate fire protection, in cooperation with the States, to all forest lands needing it. (One fourth of our forest land, mostly in the South, still lacks any organized protection).
  - b. More adequate protection against destructive forest insects and diseases.
  - c. Increased technical aid to private owners in forest management and marketing problems.
  - d. Assistance in the establishment of forestry cooperatives.
  - e. Provision for long-term credit to forest owners to facilitate sustained yield management and encourage rehabilitation of run-down forests.
  - f. Provision for insurance on standing timber.
  - g. Improved systems of taxation of forest lands.
  - h. An expanded program of research in all phases of forestry, including watershed protection, range management, forest economics, and forest

management, protection, and utilization to improve timber growing techniques and develop new and better uses, markets, etc., for forest land products.

3. An expanded program of public ownership through purchase of forest lands sub-marginal for private enterprise, to be administered as national, state, and community forests.

Question: Should certain additional areas where public interests transcend all other interests -- such as critical watershed areas -- also be brought into public ownership?

4. A comprehensive forest works program, looking both to rehabilitation and improvement of the forests and to helping solve post-war employment problems. Such work includes:

reforestation,

timber stand improvement,

flood control work,

improvement of fire protection facilities,

pest control,

reseeding of depleted forest range lands,

recreation facilities,

improvement of wildlife conditions.

These and many other jobs will eventually pay dividends in increased yields and services from the forests.

Post-war development work can be undertaken promptly on public lands. Many private lands also need such treatment.

Question: Should some types of publicly financed forest development work be undertaken on private lands? Should such work be made contingent upon assurances (through regulation of timber cutting practices, etc.) that the public investment in such work will not be jeopardized by future mishandling of the resources involved?

Forest development work will have two-fold value from the employment standpoint:

- (1) It will help to provide part-time jobs for rural people and temporary employment for war veterans and displaced war workers;
- (2) By increasing the productivity of the forests it will also create greater opportunities for permanent employment in industries and activities based upon the forest resource.



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## POSTWAR FOREST CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

Farmers have a vital interest in forest conservation.

They own nearly one-third of all our forest land.

The annual yield from farm woodlands equals in value the combined crops  
of barley, rye, rice, and flaxseed. It nearly equals that of the tobacco  
crop.

Yet the annual yield of farm woodlands could be double or treble the present  
return, through use of conservation measures.

Maximum yields could help meet national needs for forest products, and are  
required to meet postwar demands from abroad.

Forest conservation can provide more jobs after the war.

It can help provide greater security in many rural areas.